

VZCZCXRO0239
OO RUEHIK RUEHYG
DE RUEHFR #5698 2361846
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 241846Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0681
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0429
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

UNCLAS PARIS 005698

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [EUN](#) [LE](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON/UNIFIL: CHIRAC ANNOUNCES 1600 ADDITIONAL
TROOPS FOR UNIFIL

REF: PARIS 5668

¶1. (U) Summary: Speaking on national television late August 24 reftel President Chirac pledged to contribute two more battalions at 800 soldiers each to UNIFIL, bringing the total French participation to 2,000 total. France will retain command on the ground and review the situation in six months. While mentioning satisfactory command arrangements had been reached with the UN, he offered no details. End summary.

¶2. (U) There follow the highlights of Chirac's August 24 television intervention on France's participation in UNIFIL:

-- Chirac stated he had met with his cabinet in restricted session to decide on France's UNIFIL participation.

-- He recalled the suffering, destruction and loss of life in a country close to France, situated in a sensitive region. France has been engaged throughout the crisis in assisting the population, repatriating citizens, and bringing about an end to hostilities.

-- UNSCR 1701 was negotiated at France's initiative and adopted unanimously. It has allowed the establishment of a delicate ceasefire. It recognizes Israel's right to security as well as Lebanese sovereignty over its entire territory. It calls for the reinforcement of UNIFIL to monitor the ceasefire, facilitate the deployment of the Lebanese armed forces in south Lebanon and the simultaneous withdrawal of Israeli Defense Forces.

-- Already last week he doubled France's UNIFIL contingent and he kept France's aero/naval force off the coast of Lebanon, at 1700 strong, in place. There was a need to respond to an urgent situation.

-- For UNIFIL to be effective, however, there was a need for guarantees from the UN as well as from Lebanon and Israel: the force must be able to implement the mission, which means the UN had to ensure optimum conditions for a single, coherent command, ROE that allow free circulation and the ability to respond if attacked, and equitable participation. There should be a fair representation of countries, and he was pleased that some European and Muslim states have already agreed. He hoped other members of the Security Council will do so.

-- Today, he continued, considering that France's conditions had been met, he had decided to respond to the UN and Lebanon and Israel by contributing two more battalions on the ground, which would bring France's contribution to 2,000 in all. France will keep command of the force, and evaluate the situation in 6 months.

-- France's objective is peace, and it hopes the UN will be able to fix the conditions for a durable peace consisting of the return of Israeli soldiers, of Lebanese prisoners, LAF deployment into south Lebanon, disarmament of militias in an internal Lebanese process, return of refugees, and reconstruction -- France will participate in the international conference that has been called.

-- He wanted France to support peace and will deploy its soldiers toward that end. France will assume its responsibilities in Lebanon.

-- He concluded with a wish for a parliamentary debate and resolution in the fall, and called on the international community again to participate in UNIFIL.

Please visit Paris' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.c> fm

Rosenblatt